

PROVIDING DIGITAL FORUMS TO ENHANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

[0001] Recent years have seen rapid development in communication technology, particularly in the capabilities of computing systems that enable users to engage with or otherwise participate in civic issues. Indeed, conventional computing systems enable users to communicate with other users and engage in civil discourse in a variety of ways. For example, individuals can post political opinions on social media, send emails to representatives, and view live streams of town hall meetings and legislative sessions. Indeed, modern communication technologies enable users to communicate directly with representatives in addition to sharing content with large number of users.

[0002] Even as communication technology continues to improve, however, the ability of individuals to meaningfully engage in civil discourse has various limitations. For example, with the massive number of people having access to communication technology, many voices get lost in the billions of communications going back and forth between users. In addition, with the anonymity the Internet can provide, people are often flippant, rude, insincere, disingenuous, or otherwise uncivil in communicating about civic issues. Because of massive amounts of often uncivil messages going back and forth, well-informed and meaningful voices on important issues are often ignored or lost in the fray.

[0003] In addition, the current political structure also results in counterproductive discussion about important issues. For example, politics, party platforms, and biased media reports often monopolize public discourse at the expense of important civic issues that directly affect individuals. Indeed, the current political climate frequently results in high profile and often underqualified individuals having control over which civic issues are discussed and how those civic issues are resolved, even where those civic issues have a minimal impact on those high-profile individuals. As a result, many civic issues are discussed and decided upon based on a lack of information and a misrepresentation of the needs and interests of those people most affected by the various civic issues.

[0004] Moreover, current political discourse often requires that participants dedicate a substantial amount of time and money in order to have a meaningful voice. As an example, because town hall meetings and political forums often discuss a gamut of political issues, participants must often engage the entire gamut of political issues in order to have legitimacy among their peers to comment on issues that they care most about. Accordingly, current politics often require that any participant have a vested interest in all topics (or fit a particular party platform) in order to have their voice heard for any individual topic. Indeed, a constituent may desire to discuss a topic, but that topic may get pushed aside for more popular or controversial topics in which the loudest voices dominate the discussion. As a result, many individuals lose interest because they lack the money and time to become involved at a level in which their voice will be heard.

[0005] These and other problems exist with regard to facilitating effective engagement in civic dialog between users.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0006] One or more embodiments of the present disclosure provide benefits and/or solve one or more of the foregoing problems in the art with systems, methods, and computer-readable media that facilitate effective engagement in public discourse between co-users of a networking system. As will be described in further detail below, systems, methods, and computer readable media can improve civil discourse between users of a networking system by configuring a digital forum that allows users of the networking system to more effectively engage with other users about various civic issues. For example, one or more embodiments described herein facilitate proposing laws, amendments, and other initiatives, identifying users having a particular interest in the proposal(s), and providing a discussion interface within the digital forum that enables users to meaningfully engage and arrive at specific solutions about the various proposals.

[0007] As an example, in one or more embodiments, the disclosed systems, methods, and computer readable media configure a digital forum for a particular jurisdiction that allows users of the networking system to provide feedback on civic issues associated with the jurisdiction. One or more embodiments include identifying a proposed law and identifying (e.g., based on social networking data) users of a networking system having a predicted interest or expertise in the proposed law. The disclosed systems, methods, and computer readable media can further provide a discussion interface that enables users to provide feedback about the proposed law. In one or more embodiments, the disclosed systems, methods, and computer readable media monitor and aggregate the feedback to generate and provide a formalized proposal of the proposed law to users associated with the jurisdiction or any users of the networking system having a potential interest in the proposal.

[0008] Additional features and advantages of one or more embodiments of the present disclosure will be set forth in the description that follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by the practice of such example embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The detailed description is described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0010] FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of an environment in which a civic engagement system is implemented in accordance with one or more embodiments;

[0011] FIG. 2 illustrates an example graphical user interface including a listing of jurisdictions associated with digital forums provided by the civic engagement system in accordance with one or more embodiments;

[0012] FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate example graphical user interfaces including discussion interfaces for various laws in accordance with one or more embodiments;

[0013] FIGS. 4A-4B illustrate example graphical user interfaces including discussion interfaces for a proposed law in accordance with one or more embodiments;

[0014] FIG. 5 illustrates a schematic diagram of an example civic engagement system implemented on a server device(s) in accordance with one or more embodiments;

[0015] FIG. 6 illustrates a flowchart of a series of acts in a method for providing a group activity indicator in accordance with one or more embodiments;